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TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; THE GAZA STRIP; USG ASKING THE ARGENTINE  
GOVERNMENT TO PASS ANTI-TIP LEGISLATION; US DEFENSE EXPENDITURES;  
06/19/07

#### 1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend international opinion pieces and editorials cover the state of affairs in the Gaza Strip as well as the next steps to be taken by the Bush and Olmert administrations; the USG praises the Argentine Government for its approval of an anti-terrorist draft bill and requests for the passage of anti-T.I.P. legislation; and the record US defense expenditures.

#### 2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "The Palestinian territories - a civil war in a country that was not able to become a State"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst of leading "Clarín," writes (06/16) "There could be much more to be sorry about in the incipient Palestinian civil war, which has been focused on the Gaza Strip so far... than the more than one hundred casualties during the latest five days of clashes between Hamas and Al Fatah.

"... Under these circumstances, Gaza is no more than a humanitarian crisis on the verge of explosion, for which the international community does not seem better prepared than for, let's say, the Rwanda crisis by the mid-'90s.

"... There is almost content in Washington and Jerusalem circles about how things have turned out so far. The Bush and Olmert administrations have almost applauded the way the Palestinian president and his military commanders managed to flee the Gaza Strip to take refuge in the Western Bank in an attempt to save face as a government. Hamas has less military capability in the West Bank than in Gaza.

"However, more important than this is the fact that Abbas finally made the decision to fire his PM Ismail Haniya, a Hamas supporter, which finally seems to remove the unacceptable election triumph obtained by Hamas.

"Olmert and Bush are scheduled to meet in a few days in Washington and, according to some versions, the Israeli PM could bring a plan to definitely dismantle the Gaza Strip by isolating it with troops and walls, which are the central elements of the current Israeli policy on the Palestinian issue.

"The mastermind of this scheme seems to be Avigdor Lieberman, minister for Strategic Affairs, considered a true extremist, whose political party put forward the expulsion of Israeli citizens of Arab origin. According to the latest issue of 'The Jerusalem Report,' Lieberman wants to lay siege to Gaza, cut its electric energy and water supply, thereby separating the Gaza Strip not only

from Israel, but also from the rest of the Palestinian National Authority. Then, they would hold negotiations with Abbas and forget about the Gaza Strip...

"... The Gaza Strip issue promises to be more than Washington's stubbornness to create more and more terrorists. It is not a remote dilemma for Argentina, whose legislators have just passed an alleged antiterrorist draft bill that was conceived of by the US Republican Government, which is not necessarily related to the needs of the country and which keeps in store execrable potentialities for Argentines' liberties."

- "Washington gives praise to and makes demands on the Argentine Government"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," comments (06/16) "Argentina's approval of a draft bill repressing terrorist activities and financing was 'welcomed' yesterday by this city, which has long pleaded for the hemispheric coordination of security policies. However, its approval also fed the US interest over a draft bill against TIP."

"According to two USG officials, the US State and Homeland Security Departments avoided making public statements over the approval of said legislation, in part to avoid getting involved in the election debate in Buenos Aires."

"According to one USG official, 'We applaud the passing of the draft bill. It is positive for the Government, the country and the region.' The other emphasized that it also removed risks to the local financial system."

"Referring to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the source pointed out that 'It is good for the Argentine banks not to face the possibilities of FATF sanctions.' The US interest is now focused on the approval of a draft bill against TIP."

"... The struggle against terrorism is one of the points that most unite and separate the US and Argentina."

"US Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere Thomas Shannon often praises the country for its 'hemispheric leading role' in avoiding nuclear proliferation and coordinating 'anti-terror efforts.'"

"Nonetheless, several reports of the US Department of State, the Senate, the Lower House and the Treasury Department repeatedly warn about the existence of terrorist groups or, at least, terrorist financing of clandestine networks on the Triple Border. This tension is also reflected in the US mass media."

- "Record armament expenditures"

Leading "Clarín" carries an editorial (06/16) "The hope of the so-called 'peace dividends,' which was fed by the end of the Cold War era of nuclear terror and arms race, seems to be darkened in face of the record increase in armament expenditures registered in the first years of the 21st century."

"... The US leads this armament expenditure by concentrating almost half of the global expenditure... The US military expenditure, which had grown since the end of last decade, had a marked increase since George W. Bush took office, and, particularly, since the September 11 attacks and the war in Iraq."

"... Far from providing more international security, this increase in defense expenditure has been accompanied by an increasing number of clashes and violent episodes. In this way, the lack of a global confrontation between superpowers has led the way to an unrestrained increase in the arms race in the framework of greater instability and imbalance. It is hard to put a brake on this global insecurity spiral."

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